

1817  
A BRIEF SKETCH  
OF  
THE LIFE AND LABOURS  
OF  
ARCHDEACON COCKRAN,  
LATE MISSIONARY IN NORTH-WEST AMERICA.



INDIAN SETTLEMENT AT RED RIVER.

LONDON:  
THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY;  
56, PATERNOSTER ROW, 65, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD,  
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"Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I, send me."—*Isaiah vi. 8.*

**T**HE termination of the course of a great man, whether statesman, or historian, or man of science, is always fraught with deep interest; and the depth of feeling with which we regard it is in proportion to the character of the events by which his career has been marked. If it has been distinguished by great personal excellence, by disinterested self-sacrifice, by unwearied devotion to the good of mankind, its close is an event which touches the inmost soul of those who knew him, or heard of him. And when a minister of Jesus Christ, the faithful follower of his Lord, whose strength and talents, and energies have been consecrated to his Master's service, of whom it may be said, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings," finishes his course, the event calls forth the tears of genuine affection from the flock to whom he ministered. Such a servant of Christ was Archdeacon Cockran, missionary to Rupert's Land, in North-West America, who after forty years of noble and self-denying labour in the vineyard of the Lord, "having kept the faith," finished his course, and entered "into the rest which remaineth for the people of God."

Of the life and labours of this devout and earnest man, the following is a brief sketch. May the hearts of some who read be stirred up to go and do likewise. Truly "the fields are white unto the harvest, but the labourers are few."

William Cockran was born at Chillingham, in

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Northumberland, about the year 1797. At the early age of twelve years, he experienced the heart-renewing influences of the Holy Spirit, and was taught to cry, "My Father, Thou art the guide of my youth." As he advanced in years, he manifested by his consistent conduct the genuineness and power of personal religion. The son of a yeoman, he was brought up to agriculture, and he entered on life with excellent prospects.

In the year 1820, he went into Nottinghamshire, to visit his brother, who was a farmer, and lived at Retford. While there, he made the acquaintance of Mr. Brooks, then vicar of Claborough, and afterwards rector of Great Ponton, near Grantham. This friendship changed the whole course of Mr. Cockran's life.

He there heard that a schoolmaster was wanted for a little village school at Ordsall, near Retford; and, renouncing his agricultural prospects, he engaged himself to this school, which often did not bring him in two shillings and sixpence a week. He afterwards told Mr. Brooks his reason for taking this step was that he might have more time for study and preparation for the work of a missionary, to which he desired to devote himself.

While he acted as schoolmaster at Ordsall, Mr. Brooks gave him instruction, and, after he had made some progress, recommended him to the Church Missionary Society; but the recommendation was not accepted. The society afterwards, however, made the young man an advantageous offer, in a pecuniary point of view, to go out and take the management of a large tract of land, which the Queen of Travancore had ceded for the use of the Missionary College at Cottayam. This offer Mr. Cockran promptly and decidedly refused, but under circumstances and in a manner which greatly interested the late Rev. Edward Bickersteth, then secretary of the society. The reasons assigned by Mr. Cockran for his refusal manifested his

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integrity and the high motives by which he was actuated. The post in Travancore would have been far more lucrative than that of a missionary; but, on finding that to accept it would debar him from exercising the calling of an evangelist, he at once declined it. Mr. Bickersteth was struck by this refusal; he became desirous to see the man who, setting aside all consideration of earthly gain, desired to go forth and preach the gospel to the heathen. After some time an interview was arranged; and, to use the words of Mr. Brooks, Mr. Bickersteth fell in love with the earnest-minded youth, whose heart, glowing with the love of Christ, desired to proclaim the message of salvation to "the nations sitting in darkness and the shadow of death." The result of this interview with Mr. Bickersteth was that Mr. Cockran was accepted by the Church Missionary Society; and, after a further period of instruction, he was ordained deacon by the Bishop of London on the 19th of December, 1824, and priest on the 29th of May, 1825. Mr. Cockran was at that time married to a lady like-minded with himself, willing to go forth and share with her husband the toils and privations of missionary life in far-distant lands. On the 4th of June, 1825, Mr. and Mrs. Cockran, with their infant son, embarked for the Red River Settlement in North-West America. This settlement dates from the year 1811, when Earl Selkirk purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company and Cree and Saulteaux Indians a large tract of land stretching along both banks of the Red River and its tributary the Assiniboine. The country was at that time inhabited only by wandering tribes of Indians, and visited occasionally by the employés of the Hudson's Bay Company, who had trading-posts in the neighbourhood. The first band of emigrants sent out under the auspices of Earl Selkirk reached the colony in 1812. No minister of the gospel accompanied the settlers, nor were any means of grace

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provided. As a natural consequence, deeds of cruelty and crime were committed, which were a disgrace to civilization. In 1820, Mr. West went out to Red River in the capacity of chaplain to the Hudson's Bay Company. Commiserating the wretched condition of the Indians, amongst whom the vices of the white man had been introduced, Mr. West urged upon the Church Missionary Society the duty of commencing a mission in the settlement. To this appeal the Society responded. The first missionary sent out by them was Mr. Jones. The mission prospered; the gospel found its way to the hearts of the poor Indians and half-breeds. Converts increased in number; two churches were built; schools were established; and the work having become too arduous for one labourer only, Mr. Cockran was appointed his coadjutor.

"In labours more abundant," his life was henceforth consecrated with rare disinterestedness to the service of his Lord and Master. The missionaries endured great hardships. In the spring of 1826, the river overflowed its banks, owing to the sudden melting of the snow. The water was five feet deep in the mission-house, and the inmates were taken off in a boat to a high bank, where they remained in a tent till the waters subsided. They were often reduced to great distress, owing to the scarcity of food.\* On one occasion Mr. Cockran was reduced to the necessity of cutting green barley, which he rubbed out of the husk, while Mrs. Cockran dried it before the fire. To prevent a recurrence of similar dearth, Mr. Cockran, with the aid of one man and two Indian boys, ploughed five additional acres of ground, giving to this labour all the spare time he could afford from his pastoral work. "No one," says Mr. Cockran, "who is a stranger to our circumstances, can picture the anxiety felt among us with

\* The buffaloes failed; the crops were destroyed by floods.

regard to the crops; nor would you credit me were I to tell you to what straits the poor Indians were reduced." Notwithstanding these sufferings, Mr. Cockran laboured diligently. At first his labours were chiefly confined to the half-breeds and Indian women, and to the Indian boys given up to him by their parents, and who resided in the mission-house. "We have taught the boys to read; some can write and cast up accounts. We have taught them that they are sinners by nature and practice, and that Christ is the only Saviour; but they are Indians still, and as fond of their Indian customs as ever; nor have we made as yet one single step towards the evangelization and civilization of the pure adult Indians." So wrote Mr. Cockran in 1828. But ere long Mr. Cockran had the joy of baptizing an Indian and three of his children. In reply to Mr. Cockran's inquiry why he desired baptism, "I wish," said he, "to live as a Christian. I want my bad heart to love Christ." In the year 1829 Mr. Cockran wrote: "It is encouraging to witness the growing attention to Divine ordinances. On April 15 I conversed for some time with those who offered themselves for the Communion. Five appeared to have been led to Christ; and in reply to my question how they hoped to get to heaven, they answered with tears, 'We are sinful creatures; without Christ we can do nothing.'"

In this year (1829) it was deemed necessary to establish a mission station at the Grand Rapids, fifteen miles distant. To this place Mr. Cockran removed with his family, taking up their abode in a log-house which he had built. This portion of the Red River Colony stretched over a tract of land twelve miles along the river and several miles inland. The population consisted of half-breeds, a few Europeans and a small number of Indians. The half-breeds were nearly as debased in their habits as the pure Indians. In many respects Mr. Cockran's labours

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were very unlike those of an English clergyman. With the exception of the servants of the Hudson's Bay Company, he had to teach savages. Very little land had at this time been brought into cultivation, and this almost entirely by the Europeans, who had succeeded in rearing cattle; the rest of the inhabitants had to depend chiefly, if not entirely, on the chase or fishing for their supplies.

Desolate indeed was the position of this missionary in his log-house, on a wild and swampy plain, with here and there the wretched log-houses of the settlers. The people and the place presented an aspect of utter desolation. There he was, without cattle, or corn, or vegetables, or any of the necessities of life. Everything had to be obtained from the Upper Settlement; the only bread which was to be had for months was made of corn ground between two stones dug from the bank of the river, and sifted through a piece of parchment with holes pricked in it.

Mr. Cockran's agricultural knowledge was now turned to good account. It was clear that if his own wants, and those of his family, were to be supplied, the ground must be made to yield its increase. He also perceived that the natives could never be civilized unless they could be diverted from their wandering habits, fixed in settled homes, and taught to till the ground. If the parents and the children were to wander away chasing the buffalo and other wild animals; the school could never be carried on with success, nor the congregations assembled with any regularity in the mission church. It was therefore evident that the accomplishment of his great work as an ambassador of Christ would depend to a great extent on his success in teaching the natives to cultivate the soil. He accordingly brought a considerable piece of land into cultivation near his house, in order to supply his own wants and those of the schools, and to enable him at the same time to teach the Indians to become husbandmen. He took the

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greatest pains to accomplish this; but he found it a difficult task to persuade them to comply with his desire. Their natural indolence, and their unskillfulness in the use of the implements of husbandry, were most trying to the patience of their teacher. They would throw down the spade and the hoe, and declare they could use them no longer, because they made their backs and arms so stiff. If a tree had to be felled, they complained that the hatchet blistered their hands. It was still more difficult to teach them the right use of the sickle; in their awkwardness, they would often cut their fingers; then they would contrive some new method of reaping, and waste the time that was so precious. They were more successful in the use of the plough; they had acquired in hunting and shooting a quickness of eye which greatly aided them in guiding the ploughshare and making straight furrows.

"On one occasion," said Mr. Cockran, "I had for reapers some Indians who had never handled the sickle before; they made deep incisions in their fingers, and plucked more corn by the roots than they cut. At one time they tried to reap sitting, at another kneeling; but in whatever way they tried, they found it hard work. I reaped between two of them, in order to show them the European method, and I encouraged them by assuring them that if they would follow my directions they would soon handle the sickle as cleverly as they handled the gun; but they would try their own rude way before they would learn by example. Even when some progress had been made, and the ground had begun to yield its produce, and the farm to be stocked with cattle, their indolence, improvidence, and selfishness were enough to wear out the patience of any man. The potatoes would have been allowed to grow till spoiled, for want of hoeing; and the wheat would have been trodden down, unless they had been constantly reminded that winter would come again.



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"They were not more attentive to the cattle; one man allowed the hoofs of his cow to freeze to such an extent as to render her useless. Another, when the influenza seized him, and he was unable to fish as usual, thought that beef would be good for him. 'I shall soon die,' he said; 'this bad disease kills the Indians, and I had better kill my cow.' One of his sons remonstrated with him, 'You do not think of your children, whom you will leave behind you;' but to reason was vain, and the cow was killed. Another man, when he was sick, killed an exceedingly valuable ox because he thought he should not need its labour again; he did not care that he had a house full of children to whom the ox would be useful after his death. But he recovered, and doubtless he felt the want of his ox when winter came, and he had to carry his grain to the mill upon his back."

How trying to the faith and patience of the missionary must it have been to have to instruct such men! but Mr. Cockran persevered, and he reaped his reward. Like the husbandman, who sows his seed and has long patience till he reap the fruit of his labour, so this faithful labourer had long patience, and in due time the seed sown brought forth fruit. The once wild Indian ploughed his land, sowed his seed, and weeded his wheat. He placed his children at school, and kept them there. When the harvest-time came, he cut down his corn, and bound it in sheaves.

As time passed on, a visible improvement took place in the outward condition and habits of the Indians; and we may conceive the joy which filled the benevolent heart of Mr. Cockran, when he described the following contrast:—"Instead of seeing some poor Indian woman, in the depth of winter, hauling her half-naked children on a sledge over the ice, let down her hook, and shivering, wait for hours till some fish laid hold of it to serve for

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their scanty meal, we now see her and her children nicely and warmly clothed, with a buffalo cloak folded neatly around them, in their own cariole, drawn by their own ox or horse, bringing them to the house of God, to thank Him as well as she may for all His mercies, spiritual and temporal."

But the missionary pastor had a higher reward than this. This new agricultural settlement proved highly subservient to the spiritual progress of the people. Two years after Mr. Cockran had settled at the Rapids, his congregation had increased from thirty to three hundred.

"No stormy weather," writes Mr. Cockran, "deters the people from coming to the house of God. Fearless of wind, snow, and rain, they force their way every Sabbath morning to the church, and there sing and pray, and listen with devout attention to God's Word read and preached." Nor were there wanting instances of true conversion. A woman whom Mr. Cockran visited in her illness, in reply to his question as to what chiefly occupied her thoughts while lying alone on her bed of sickness, mentioned Matt. ii. 28. and John vi. 37. "These words," she said, "dwell in my mind night and day." Then clasping her hands, with the tears rolling down her cheeks, she exclaimed, "Precious Saviour! Thou art the best Friend in the day of sickness!"

On his first settling there, he built a good-sized schoolroom, in which he collected a number of children, and in this room the people assembled for Divine worship. In time, the increase of worshippers called for the erection of a church. The poor people readily assisted him to the utmost of their power. It was opened in 1832; and his own words will best unfold the feelings which swelled his heart as he beheld this crowning ornament of the new village, and the congregation which filled it. "Three years ago," said he, "my church, house, school, congregation, were all imaginary; the timber

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was growing in the forest, the glass and nails were in England, and one half of my congregation were wandering heathen, worshipping no God, acknowledging no Saviour, knowing no sabbath. But when the time appointed came, death and hell could not hold their prisoners, their jubilee was come, they must go free; and, gathered from the shores of almost every place between Hudson's Bay and the Rocky Mountains, they were brought to this place, where God has provided for them the glad tidings of salvation."

Soon after Mr. Cockran had settled at the Rapids, he began to take measures for the accomplishment of a long-cherished scheme—that of forming an exclusively Indian settlement. He was convinced that this was necessary for the permanent benefit of the Indians. There was a place, called the Netley Creek, fifteen miles below the Rapids, a part of the Indian reserves, which was deemed a suitable spot on which to form the settlement. Many were the difficulties which he encountered in carrying out this plan, arising chiefly from the prejudices of the chief Pigwys and the medicine man against it. But he was not to be disheartened; he had the faith which

"Laughs at impossibilities,  
And cries, 'It shall be done.'"

In 1832 Mr. Cockran set out to examine the spot; he had to make his way partly on horseback through a succession of swamps, and partly in a canoe between blocks of ice piled one upon another. Having made his survey, he determined at once to begin. He left his home at the Rapids, accompanied by two of his servants and a yoke of oxen, pitched his leathern tent, and commenced his operations; and although he and his men and oxen suffered much from want of shelter, he continued week after week, returning to the Rapids on Saturday, and back to his work on Monday. This spot, however, was found unsuitable for the settlement he desired to establish, and in the following year he moved three miles higher up the river.

In the early part of 1833, he stood at a bend of the river, and surveyed the place—a dreary waste, untouched by the hand of culture, with one solitary wigwam on the the shore of the bay formed by the sweep of the river. In October, 1835, he stood on the same spot, and beheld a village standing along the crescent bay; twenty-three little whitewashed cottages shining through the trees, each with its column of smoke curling upwards from the chimney and each with its stacks of wheat and barley. Each cottage was surrounded by its patch of cultivated ground, in which cows grazed; while in the centre stood the school-house, where sixty merry children, just released from school, were leaping, running, or wrestling. All was life and cheerfulness. “It is,” said he, “but a speck in the wilderness, and a stranger might despise it; but we who know the difficulties that have attended the work can truly say that ‘God hath done great things for us,’ were it only that those sheaves of corn have been raised by hands that hitherto had only been exercised in deeds of blood and cruelty.”

Mr. Cockran now determined to erect a windmill; and during its erection his patience was sorely tried by the indolence of the people. It was built on a piece of ground cultivated by an Indian. One morning, when the carpenter went to work, he required the assistance of this man; he was in bed. “It is time to rise; the sun is above the trees,” said the carpenter.

“I was thinking so,” was the reply.

“The birds are upon your corn.”

“You can drive them off.”

At this moment the carpenter saw Mr. Cockran preparing to cross the river; he called out, “Mr. Cockran is coming.”

This aroused the man, he rose hastily, and in a few minutes he was at work.

The mill when finished produced a marvellous effect. “The savage seemed all at once to develope

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a new character. On the blowing of the wind, he hastened to winnow his wheat into his bag, he ran to the mill, and stood in eager expectation till his turn came; when once it was in the hopper, and the stones were at work, he handled it as it fell into the box, to see if it were well ground. I had thought it scarcely possible so to rouse the drowsy powers of the Indian."

Gratifying as all this was, the minister of Christ would have been grievously disappointed if it had not been subservient to something more important than the temporal comfort of his flock. His great aim was to win souls; and he desired to see them bringing forth the fruits of righteousness, and this hope was fulfilled.

A clergyman who visited this new settlement in 1838, expressed his surprise at the dexterity of the Indians in the use of the axe and the hoe, and the pleasure he felt as he looked at the construction of their houses, and observed the culture of their enclosures.

Six years afterwards, the Bishop of Montreal held a confirmation in the settlement, and bore his testimony to the great and happy experiment of fixing the natives in a compact and settled community, as tillers of the soil. "They had," he said, "everything to learn, and they learnt it from Mr. Cockran; they were moulded by his indefatigable hand, and the task was one in which nothing but faith and prayer could have carried him through."

To supply the Indians with religious ordinances, a weekly evening service was commenced, and an afternoon Sunday service, in addition to the two services at St. Andrew's, thirteen miles distant. The journeys to and from this Indian village were such as could only have been performed by one animated by the love of Christ. "Willing to spend and be spent" in his Master's service, he braved the piercing cold of those Arctic winters; he counted toil a pleasure and weariness delight, if only he might declare to perishing men the glorious message: "God so loved

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the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

One of his journeys he thus describes: "I have had many a dirty ride, but this day surpassed all. The wind veered round to the north and froze sharply. The mud and water were frozen to my horse's legs, so that he could scarcely drag along. I got off and led him; I thought that as the poor fellow had carried me many a mile, it was but fair that I should walk his pace. When I got home I was obliged to thaw the mud and ice off his legs by putting them into a pail of warm water." On another occasion he says, "I leave home with a heart glowing with love and a desire to praise God and proclaim the message of salvation to my fellow-creatures. I ride on, a drifting snowstorm almost blinds myself and my horse, my hands and feet are benumbed, my face blistered with the intensity of the frost. The chill reaches my heart, and I seem to have lost all spiritual feeling. But when I arrive, and hear two hundred voices sing the praises of Him who redeemed them by His blood, and whom lately they knew not, my heart grows warm again. I remember His promise who has said, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'" Truly might he have said, with St. Paul, "in journeyings often"—"in weariness and painfulness."

In June, 1836, a new church was commenced at the Indian settlement. Many of the people at the Rapids took great interest in its erection, and rendered all the help in their power. It was opened on the 4th of January, 1837. The day was bitterly cold, the snow fell thickly, but so great was the interest felt in it, that all the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company within reach, and all the settlers in the neighbourhood, were present, and two hundred of the once fierce savages joined in the solemn service, and lifted up their well-tuned voices in the praises of the Lord their Redeemer.

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Mr. Cockran's heart overflowed with joy on that day. Scarcely four years had elapsed from the commencement of the village, and forty-seven Christian families, numbering two hundred and sixty individuals, then resided in it, the fruits of his ministry, his joy and crown of rejoicing in the Lord. They were not free from defects; but their desire was to serve the Lord, and their heathen neighbours had become more orderly through their example. The village extended at intervals nearly three miles along the river; and the sabbath was observed in it as in an English village.

This was a great achievement; the erratic being who had wandered as a vagabond without a home had now fixed himself by the house of God; and commenced a new calling. "The people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." "The wilderness and the solitary place were glad for them, and the desert rejoiced and blossomed as the rose." From the swamps and forests of the North, God had gathered His people to hear of the Name that is above every name; "the Spirit had been poured upon them from on high;" and they who once "were aliens and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world," were "made nigh by the blood of Christ."

In 1838 the principal men at the Indian village addressed the following letter to the Church Missionary Society:

"SERVANTS OF THE GREAT GOD,—

"We once more call to you for help, and hope our cry will avail. You sent us what you called the Word of God; we left our hunting-grounds, and came to hear it. But we did not altogether like it, for it told us to leave off drunkenness and adultery; to keep only one wife; to cast away our idols, and

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all our heathen bad ways; but as it still repeated to us that, if we did not, the great God would send us to the devil's great fire, by the goodness of God we saw at last it was true. We now like the Word of God, and we have left off our sins; we have cast away our rattles, our drums, our idols, and all heathen bad ways. But what are we to do? Mr. Jones is going to leave us; Mr. Cockran talks of it. Must we turn to our idols and gods again? or must we turn to the French praying masters? We see three French praying masters have come to the river, and not one for us! What is this, friends? The Word of God says that one soul is worth more than all the world; surely, then, three hundred souls are worth one praying master! It is not once or twice a week teaching that is enough to make us wise: we have bad hearts, and we hate our bad hearts and all our evil ways, and we wish to cast them all away; and we hope in time, by the help of God, to be able to do it. But have patience, our friends. We hope our children will do better, and will learn to read God's Word, so as to go forth to their country people to tell them the way of life, and that many may be saved from the great devil's fire. We hope you will pity us, and hear our cry, and send us a father to live with us here to teach us. We thank you all for what you have done for us, and for sending us the word of life; and may the great God be kind to you all! We feel our hearts sore when we think of you all, and the praying masters that are here; we pray for you and for them, and shall still do so."

To show the nature of the work carried on by Mr. Cockran among the Indians, one example will suffice. A young man who was dying sent for Mr. Cockran, who asked him, "Joseph, what do you wish me to do for you?"

"I have sent for you, sir, to pray for me just here. When I was strong and could go to church, I felt



happy in the worship of God, and as long as I could kneel down here and pray, I found my heart light; but now I cannot rise, my heart is cold as ice, and I fear it is not well with me."

"Do you believe that the Son of God is able and willing to save you?"

"Yes, entirely," answered the youth; "and it is by looking to Him that my heart has been drawn away from the world, and I now rejoice that I am going out of it. In heaven I shall be near God, and He will make me happy. I sometimes feel a little afraid when I think of the change, but I say to myself, Jesus is there, and He will call me to come near Him, and then all my fears go."

But, now, the powerful frame of Mr. Cockran began to give way under the pressure of work so laborious and so long-continued; yet, faithful and loyal to his Master, he held on his way, "faint, yet pursuing," till, in 1846, the prostration of his strength compelled him to take leave of his flock at the Grand Rapids, to whom he had ministered for seventeen years. Before doing so he commenced the erection of a church adequate to the increased congregation. On the 4th of June, 1846, Mr. Cockran bade farewell to his people, whose sorrow was great because they thought "they should see his face no more." He retired to Toronto. Here, the rest and freedom from care for one year so far restored his health, that in 1847 he gladly accepted an invitation from the Hudson's Bay Company to take the chaplaincy of the Upper Settlement, where he had commenced his labours in 1825. In 1853 he had the great gratification of seeing the foundation stone of a new church laid by Bishop Anderson in lieu of the one opened there in 1837.\*

Two years previously, he had visited Portage la Prairie, at the special request of the Indians; and

\* This church was called St. Andrew's.

there he began a new settlement, with its school and farm. After the lapse of two years, he succeeded in erecting a church and parsonage, and here, in 1857, he took up his abode, and laboured on till the Master's voice summoned His faithful servant to "enter into the joy of his Lord."

He caught cold bathing on a warm day, inflammation set in, disease gained strength, and on Sunday, the 1st of October 1865, he entered into rest.

As the end drew on, he looked stedfastly unto Jesus, he manifested a firm and earnest trust in his Saviour, and calmly yielded up his soul to God.

His own words, written a few months before his decease, contain a lucid summary of his labours:—"Forty years ago, I left London for Gravesend to come to this country. After twenty years spent in the service of my Lord, the prostration of my strength obliged me to seek repose; twelve months' seclusion from the world, spent in prayer, reading, and meditation, restored my health, and I returned to the old field of labour. I completed St. Andrew's Church, Parsonage, and Orphan Home. I then went to the Indian settlement, built an excellent church, and left one hundred and twenty-five families settled in houses to fill it. In 1855 I visited La Prairie, and built a church for forty-eight families. Having failed to induce any one to take up the cause of La Prairie, I came here in 1857. Since then I have built two other churches, which have regular congregations attending Divine service. After forty years' active warfare against barbarism and heathenism, I have the satisfaction of witnessing territory to the extent of one hundred miles brought under the benign influence of Christianity and civilization, in a country separated by six hundred miles from all civilized men."

What a vast amount of toil, sustained for forty years, from early manhood to age! What was the secret spring of this life of rare devotion and self-denial?

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It lay in the genuineness and power of personal religion. His was the filial affection which gave him the consciousness that he was the child of God. In a letter written to Mr. Brooks a year before he left England, he spoke thus: "I have been contemplating the extent of my Father's dominion, and I feel, to my ineffable comfort, that wherever I may go I shall be under His parental care; wherever I may labour, I shall be in His vineyard." He was the Christian, depicted by the poet, who—

"Calls the delightful scenery all his own;  
His are the mountains, and the valleys his,  
His to enjoy with a propriety none can feel;  
But with filial confidence inspired,  
Can lift his unpresumptuous eye to heaven.  
And smiling say, My Father made them all."

With this filial assurance, the devoted missionary found a home in the wilds of the Far West; and toil was sweet, for it was toil for a Father whom he loved. His faith was that of the heart, his trust in God was firm, his obedience to His will unwavering, his eye to His glory single; and the result was, he did a work which has been the admiration of all who have seen or heard of it—a work which has brought joy to multitudes, and blessings lasting as their existence.

One of the most lovely features in the archdeacon's character was his entire disinterestedness; the love of Christ glowed in his heart, and "constrained him to live not unto himself, but unto Him who loved him, and gave Himself for him." He declined, as we have seen, in early life a lucrative offer, because it was not compatible with the duties of an evangelist. When his health failed, and he was invited to return home in order to recruit it, he refused, lest, to use his own words, "absence should wean him from his sheep in the American wilderness." Again, when the low state of the funds of the Church Missionary Society created serious doubts about the continuance

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of the North American Mission, he gave up at different times 60% and 70% of his salary to diminish the expense—a sacrifice he could ill afford. In nothing was his disinterestedness more conspicuous than in his acceptance, on his return from Toronto, of the chaplaincy of the Hudson's Bay Company at the Upper Settlement, on the small stipend allowed him; he determined to live for a period on that income, that he might labour without cost to the society, although for two years it subjected himself and his family to privations which are seldom experienced by cottagers in England. In him truly the love of his Master triumphed over the love of self.

He had expressed a wish to be buried in the churchyard of St. Andrew's, at the Grand Rapids, where he had spent the greater part of his ministerial life. The Christian pastor wished to rest amongst those to whom he had brought the word of life, and whom he had committed to the dust in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, knowing that he should wake with them in the same glorious image in the morning of the resurrection.

The funeral procession had to halt three nights in its journey of seventy-five miles from La Prairie to St. Andrew's. On the third night it halted at the Upper Settlement, and moved thence on the 6th of October, 1865, on the corresponding day of the corresponding month on which he had arrived there, forty years before. A large number of persons, from the chief judge and factor of the district to the lowliest individual, assembled to witness the performance of the last solemn rites, and to express their love and esteem for the pastor who had brought to them the glorious message of the gospel. Deep grief was shown by the Indians. Some wished the coffin to be opened, that they might look once more on his face. He was laid in the tomb amidst the sobs and tears of the assembled multitude.

LABOURS OF ARCHDEACON COCKRAN.

The good work commenced by this devoted servant of Christ has, under the fostering care of the Church Missionary Society, continued to grow and prosper. Truly has the promise been verified, "My Word shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it." Three of the four churches planted in the heart of the great North American continent are now about to be transferred to the church organisation of the colony. The fourth, the Indian settlement at La Prairie, assembles for worship in a church at the extremity of the Indian Reserve, set apart for the aboriginal population.

Red River, fifty years ago almost entirely isolated and cut off from intercourse with the civilized world, has been reached by the great tide of Anglo-Saxon emigration. At that time, the ordinary way of reaching it was by Hudson's Bay, which was inaccessible from ice for seven or eight months in the year. From Hudson's Bay there was a long journey by boats, which had to be pulled against the stream, with a number of breaks in the navigation, called "portages," over which the boats and everything they contained had to be carried. It is now the capital of the newly-formed province of Manitoba, in the Dominion of Canada, and the traveller who wishes to reach it has the choice of several routes. Each day seems to open out more and more this secluded region, once called the "fag end of the earth." Through it is about to be constructed one of the great highways of traffic between England and Asia, the Canadian Pacific Railway, which is to connect the Atlantic with the Pacific.

What shall be the fate of this little church in the Far West is a question which deeply stirs the hearts of those who take an interest in the Red Indian race, whose annals, alas! it has been too truly remarked, have written upon them "mourning and lamentation and woe." From the time that the European

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stranger first set his foot upon their shores, their numbers have continued to diminish. Only a remnant now remains of those numerous tribes who once called the great American continent their own. Numbers have perished by the sword; still greater numbers have fallen victims to the vices which the white man has introduced among them.

But, dark as is the picture, some bright gleams of light irradiate the gloom. To a few favoured spots the glorious gospel of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has penetrated, and produced results which the labours of the civilized trader, extending over centuries, failed to effect. Foremost amongst these, the Indian settlement on the banks of the Red River is a standing monument of the successful efforts of our first missionaries to reclaim the Indians from their wandering life to more settled habits. This difficult task was commenced, as we have seen, by Mr. Cockran in 1832; the settlement now contains from seven to eight hundred members, of whom about one hundred and seventy are communicants; and it has been truly observed of them that, "morally and spiritually, the white stranger might learn lessons of wisdom from many a poor Christian Indian." Some of them have well-cultivated farms and smiling homesteads of their own, and all are under the pastoral care of one of their own countrymen, the Rev. Henry Cochrane. During the insurrection which took place in the Red River settlement in 1869-70, the native Indians showed a very loyal spirit, affording a marked contrast to the conduct of the Roman Catholic half-breeds, who took a prominent part in the rebellion.

During the troubles, heathen and Roman Catholic Indians, preferring English rule, flocked to the Indian settlement. The Indians erected a large tent for council purposes, and in this tent they permitted the Rev. H. Cochrane and others to preach to them the everlasting gospel. Thus multitudes

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heard for the first time the great truths of the gospel, that man, lost and ruined by the fall of our first parents, may find access to God through a crucified Saviour; they heard with wondering awe that "God commendeth His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us,"—listened, with what feelings who shall say? to the earnest and affectionate invitation of one of their own race to "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." So wondrously does He who sits above the water-floods overrule all events to His own glory.

What a testimony is this Indian settlement to the power of the gospel! What a glorious result has followed the labours of Archdeacon Cockran, and others who, like him, inspired by love to Christ, and sustained by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, "counted not their lives dear unto them, so that they might preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ!" The once superstitious savage of the desert now gathers his household around him morning and evening, and reads in his own language the Word of God: No longer deluded by the cunning artifices of the medicine man, the gospel is preached to them in all its purity by pastors of their own race. Their children are educated in schools, for the support of which the settlement is taxed; these schools are open to the inspection of the Superintendent of Protestant Schools. The words have come to pass, "Judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field." The people, once wanderers and homeless, dwell in peaceable habitations, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places. Truly, "blessed are they who sow beside all waters." How great will be their reward! How ineffable the joy which awaits them when, having laid down the weapons of their warfare, they hear the Master's greeting, "Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will

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make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" Earthly crowns shall crumble in the dust, earthly honours are fleeting as the day; but "they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the brightness of the firmament and as the stars, for ever and ever."

"Where are the soldiers of the cross,  
Sworn to be faithful to their Lord?  
Why do they not count all things loss,  
Go boldly forth, and preach the Word?

Lord, shalt Thou call for help in vain?  
'Who will go for Me' dost Thou cry?  
Oh! let me hear Thy voice again:  
Tell me, my Saviour, Is it I?

Must I arise, must I gird on  
The missionary sword and shield?  
Must I, the frail and fearful one,  
Go forth to such a battle-field?

Yes; I must, sacrifice repose  
To His command who reigns above,  
And labour for the souls of those  
Who have not known His dying love.

My friends and home I leave behind,  
And Nature's tenderest ties are riven;  
I hope a better home to find,  
And friends to meet again in heaven.

Only Thy Spirit, Lord, impart,  
And let Thy presence with me go:  
Then confidence shall fill my heart,  
And banish fear of all below."

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